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camera to a tree and focusing for a close range picture on a nest bulging with young Robins, I noticed them disgorging cherry stones, one of which dropped on the side of the nest, and rolled back inside. The parent birds almost universally remove all excrement from the nest, but it was evident that they did not trouble themselves about removing the clean cherry stones, and on examination of several nests of the Robin, Wood Robin, and Catbird, I found as usual that they each contained from ten to fifteen stones, but, as I had never specially noted before, were perfectly clean, and must have been disgorged in all cases.

I concluded, therefore, that nature has only provided the small bird with this means of getting rid of the stone, which is too large to pass beyond the cavity of the stomach. I only wonder that I never thought of it before, for during cherry season, in nearly every old nest, at least of the varieties mentioned, will be found a clean little pile of cherry stones.—WM. L. BAILY, *Ardmore, Pa.*

**Birds' Tongues in Pictures.**—During this spring I have had especial opportunity to study song birds (Vireos, Warblers, House Wren, Catbird, Sparrows, Grackles, Orioles),<sup>1</sup> and one point of interest which I have determined to my satisfaction is that from a distance of a few feet, with a strong opera glass, a bird's tongue *cannot* be seen between the open mandibles when singing. In almost all drawings or paintings of singing birds one will find the elevated tongue shown clearly. The musical instrument of a bird is not its tongue, as almost every one knows; the sounds and modulations are produced in the throat and therefore why should the tongue be expected to show (except, perhaps, as a modulator).

To cut the tongue out of a picture of a singing bird detracts from it and looks exceedingly strange, solely because we are used to seeing it so in likenesses, but not in life—but the portrait nevertheless becomes true to nature.—REGINALD HEBER HOWE, JR., *Longwood, Mass.*

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## RECENT LITERATURE.

**Citizen Bird.**<sup>2</sup>—‘Citizen Bird’ is a unique contribution to the literature of Ornithology. It addresses an audience which ornithologists had previously neglected and does it in so attractive a manner that the reader's attention is held from cover to cover. With perhaps no desire

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<sup>1</sup> I had no opportunity of observing Thrushes, except the Robin.

<sup>2</sup> Citizen Bird | Scenes from Bird-Life in Plain | English for Beginners | By Mabel Osgood Wright | And | Elliott Coues | With one hundred and eleven Illustrations | By Louis Agassiz Fuertes | New York | The Macmillan Company | London: Macmillan & Co., Ltd. | 1897 | All rights reserved | 12mo. pp. xiv + 430. Engraved half-tones in text, 111. (Price, \$1.50.)